

pose of supplying the defects in our merchant shipping? These are problems of which the Government has not offered any solution. The Minister of Trade and Commerce, whose attention was directed to these matters some months ago, failed to appreciate the importance of the subject. Does he seriously think that the people will accept as the performance of the whole duty of the Government the payment of a certain amount of money to the Imperial Munitions Board?

What about the wage earners of this country, particularly those engaged in the steel industry? Where are they to get employment? Where are the ships to be found? Are we to sit here supinely watching the hundreds and thousands of tons of shipping go down day by day and, while every other nation interested in the war and in the maintenance of transportation is doing its duty, are we to be told that our Government is incapable of dealing with this problem in any way, and that the only solution that can be found is the suggestion that we are going to have those two ships costing \$600,000? If this Government is doing anything else, I am sure the House and the country would like to know what it is. I submit this beggarly proposition of \$600,000 to help towards the establishment of a merchant marine in Canada, with thousands of tons of shipping going down day by day, and our trade being paralyzed, and our shell manufacturing being absolutely stopped, is all the Government proposes to do in the way of meeting the existing conditions.

Mr. PUGSLEY: I agree fully with the remarks just made by my hon. friend from Pictou (Mr. Macdonald). I have had it brought home to me perhaps as strongly as to any member of this House how lamentably the Government has failed in the proper discharge of its duty towards Canada and towards the Empire in the matter of shipbuilding. As my hon. friend has said the subject has been brought before the House on a great many occasions. We have urged it upon the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Sir George Foster) who seems to have been entrusted more particularly with this matter, and who from the experience we have had with that hon. gentleman, so far as shipbuilding is concerned, must have been entrusted with it because to the knowledge of his colleagues he would not take any action along practical lines. The minister has told us that he had in view an elaborate scheme for

[Mr. Macdonald.]

the building of ships after the war. He did not seem to appreciate the fact that it is during the war and under the extraordinary conditions caused by the war that the Government should take action in the direction of shipbuilding. After the war, these questions will solve themselves very well. Since the outbreak of the war, the condition so far as transportation is concerned, not only across the Atlantic but along the coasts of Canada, has become more acute from year to year and from month to month. At the present time, we in the Maritime Provinces are in the deplorable condition that we—with thousands of miles of coast-line and great forests capable of supplying all the timber necessary for the building of ships, and with splendid sites for shipyards, and with our men having the instinct for shipbuilding—see our shipping practically disappeared from the seas, and even the coasting trade of Canada not being supplied with ships. There are no vessels capable of carrying on that trade, and the people of the Maritime Provinces are in the position that they are obliged to pay three times as much for coal as they did a few years ago. This is a deplorable condition of affairs, but it does not seem to appeal to the Government. After the third year of the war, they appointed a fuel controller. What is this fuel controller doing? He is simply telling the people that the price of coal is high because there are no ships to carry the coal from the points of production to the Maritime Provinces. Yet the Minister of Trade and Commerce, who has been charged with this work, sits back supinely and says: Those are dreadful conditions, but they must go on, there seems to be no remedy for them. I think the Government ought to give some answer to the charge which has been laid by my hon. friend from Pictou.

Mr. COCHRANE: The election is not on yet. This is not the time to make campaign speeches.

Mr. PUGSLEY: I am not making a campaign speech. I am speaking for my constituency and my provinces, and I am speaking for the Maritime Provinces. I am endeavouring to depict as well as I can the unbearable conditions existing there because of the supineness, the indifference, the apathy, and the inaction of the Government in connection with shipbuilding. My hon. friend has pointed to the fact that the Imperial Munitions Board is building ships in Canada. It is quite true they are doing a little in that direction, but it is only